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A HISTORY OF GRUNDY COUNTY Ia.

FROM THE EARLIEST RECORDS UP TO

JULY 4, 1876.

H. H. Beckman







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A HISTORY OF GRUNDY COUNTY  
FROM THE EARLIEST RECORDS **1990818**

JULY 4, 1876.

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E. H. BECKMAN, EDITOR

ATLAS PRINT, GRUNDY CENTER, IOWA

After the discovery of the Western Continent, the nations of Europe established a law, by which any part of this new world discovered or explored by any one of them, should be absolutely that nation's territory by the right of discovery. This custom was soon

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A HISTORY OF GRUNDY COUNTY  
FROM THE EARLIEST RECORDS UP TO  
JULY 4, 1876.

A Valuable and Exhaustive Collection of Interesting  
Information Upon That Subject: Embracing Its  
Progressive Course Under the  
French, English, and Yakees,  
Its Settlement, Surface, Resources, Glories, Defects  
and Prospects with Incidents And Anecdotes,  
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BY

E. H. BECKMAN, ESQ.

ATLAS PRINT, GRUNDY CENTER, IOWA

After the discovery of the Western Continent, the nations of Europe established a law, by which any part of this new world discovered or explored by any one of them, should be absolutely that nation's territory by the right of discovery. This custom was soon





so modified that actual occupancy must be combined with discovery. In consequence of this law, the French claimed all the country bordering on the "Father of Waters"--the Mississippi--although the river had been first discovered by the Spaniards; Desoto and his followers had descended the stream from the point of discovery to its mouth, but had failed to establish possession. The enterprising Frenchmen, Marquette and Joliet, the former representing the Church and the latter the State, discovered the upper Mississippi in the year 1673 and are supposed to have been the

#### FIRST WHITE MEN

who ever saw or trod the soil of Iowa. The lower Mississippi was re-discovered by the gallant Frenchman, LaSalle, in 1682 and the French held possession of this vast country, the whole Mississippi Valley for nearly one hundred years. In 1763 France ceded all its possessions on the East side of the river to England and also in a secret treaty, ceded all of its West side territory to Spain. France, however, under the reign of the Emperor Napoleon the First, regained this country from Spain, but, Napoleon, being fearful that it might fall into the hands of his greatest enemies, the English, sold the province of Louisiana, the name by which the French Colonies in the Mississippi Valley were known, to the United States. The first price asked was \$125,000,000, which was subsequently reduced to \$15,000,000, and for this sum, by treaty





of April 30th, 1803, during the administration of President Jefferson, this great and vast Empire became the United States.

After the acquisition the part which now constitutes the State of Iowa, was at different periods a part of the Territory of Louisiana, the Territory of Missouri, the Territory of Michigan and the Territory of Wisconsin, until on the 4th day of July, 1838, the Territory of Iowa was created and it admitted as a State into the National confederacy on the 28th day of December, 1846, as the 29th State in the Union.

From the earliest time the country West of the Mississippi was described by the Indians and early traders as the finest region in the world, and consequently, as soon as the Indian titles were extinguished, which was done peacefully by treaties of our Government with the Sacs and Foxes, the Iowas, the Sioux and other tribes of Indians; the pioneers poured into the new State, to make their homes on the fertile praries of Iowa--

#### THE BEAUTIFUL LAND!

Its noble streams, picturesque hills and valleys, and broad prairies with a soil surpassing anything they had ever seen were the delight of all comers.

In the heart of this Beautiful Land, between the Iowa and Cedar Rivers, a region unsurpassed by any other in the State, lies our own





## COUNTY OF GRUNDY,

comprising in extent fourteen congressional townships, containing 322 509, 10-100 acres of as fine land as can be found in any State of the Union, or in any country of the known world; the richness of its soil is proverbial all over this grand and fertile State!

Grundy was erected into a county by act of the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, of January the 15th, 1851. It was attached by act of February 5th, 1851, to Buchanan county for judicial, election and revenue purposes. By act of January 22nd, 1853, it was attached to Black Hawk county and remained so until it assumed its own organization within its own limits. It is named after

## FELIX GRUNDY,

the eminent statesman and jurist. The County of Grundy is bounded on the east by Black Hawk county, on the North by Butler county, on the West by Hardin county, and on the South by Marshall and Tama counties. It is in the fourth tier of counties from the North and in the sixth from the South, while it is the fifth county from the East and the eighth from the West; its location, therefore, being East and North from the center of the State, and almost wholly in the valley of the Cedar River, nearly all the streams in the County flowing in an Easterly direction. The surface is rolling prairie, undulating enough to have sufficient drainage, and composed of that peculiar soil, which withstands as well the ravages of drouth and the continuous floods of wet seasons. It is emphatically a prairie country, the





original surveys only returning 3,000 acres of timber in its borders.

The principal stream of the County is the Black Hawk Creek, rising within one mile of the western limit of the center and traversing the county in an easterly direction, receiving as its tributaries on the North side, Marble's Creek and the North Fork, and on the South side, the Minnehaha, Munn's Creek, Mosquito Creek and Fred's Creek, leaving the County in the northeast corner of Black Hawk Township. In the southeast Township we find Bear Creek and Dowd Creek, both running southwesterly to the Iowa River. Wolf Creek rises in Clay and Melrose Townships, then runs westerly and southerly through Felix Township, until it takes a decided easterly direction and flows through the southern tier of sections in Clay Township and leaves the County near its southeast extremity. In the center of Shiloh Township Pine Creek rises, flowing south westerly to the Iowa. In the north of Shiloh we have a branch of Beaver Creek, which unites with several other branches of the same stream that rise and nicely water the Township of German, near the line between German and Pleasant Valley Township and forming a respectable creek, flows northeasterly through the last mentioned Township into Butler county. There are numerous other small creeks and water-courses, all remarkable for the transparency and purity of the water. The channels of all the streams in the County are crooked and shallow, and during very heavy showers, or in the Spring and Summer freshets, they frequently overflow their banks and submerge the bottom lands.





The natural timber found in the County is at or near the water-courses. The principal groves found along the Black Hawk Creek are, Lush's Grove, Elm Grove and Adam's Grove in Black Hawk Township; Green, or Cole's Grove, Clark's and Marble's Groves near the center of the county, and Hickory Grove about four miles west of the Center on Wolf Creek is Conrad's Grove and Wolf Grove and on the Beaver is a fine grove known as Burk's Grove. The timber is principally oak, hickory, elm, ash, maple, willow and walnut. Since the settlement of the County, a large area of timber has been planted by the enterprising inhabitants and pleasant groves surround nearly every residence in the County, and add much to the comfort of the people and the beauty of the landscapes. A wise legislation encourages the growth of forest trees and orchards; a certain extent of either in good growing condition exempting the owner of the land from a share of taxation.

#### THE ONLY STONE

found in the County is on Wolf Creek; the best quarry being at Conrad's Grove; this stone is a greyish-white limestone of fine grain and great hardness making excellent building material as well as excellent lime. In some localities the so-called "lost stones" are found generally in the depressions, but very seldom in sufficient quantities to be utilized.

By the system of surveys adopted by the U. S. Government--which is acknowledged to be the best method in the world--all lines are





straight. The land is first divided into townships six miles square and then subdivided into sections one mile square and 36 to a township. The township lines in Grundy County were run in the years 1843 and 1846 and the section lines principally in 1847, though some as late as 1849. The land in the County was subject to entry as early as 1851, but no land was purchased until some two years later. The first entry being made by R. M. Cameron of Cedar Falls, on the 18th day of February, 1853; the second entry was made by John W. Conrad of Conrad's Grove in Grundy County, on the 6th day of December, 1853. A few tracts were located in 1854, mostly tracts with some timber upon them. In the year 1855 however, began the great rush for western lands, and it seems that all the eastern men thought the possession of a piece of western prairie indispensable to their happiness and prosperity. The land-masters came by tens and hundreds, the demand became so great that the land offices were obliged to close their doors as it was impossible for the officers to accommodate the throng of land buyers, and at the same time make no false or double locations. The Government had at this time issued to its soldiers that participated in the wars of 1812 and Mexico a certificate for from 40 to 160 acres of land. These certificates were known as "Military Land Warrants." These could be located on any Government lands subject to entry and as many of the soldiers, their widows or heirs, could not locate the lands partially from want of means and partially from inexperience, these warrants were sold in the open market, eagerly bought up and located upon the fine Iowa lands.





The greatest protion of Grundy County was bought up in 1855 and about 9-10ths of all the land was entered with Military Land Warrants

#### THE FIRST WHITE MAN

who came to settle permanently in Grundy County was William D. Peck. He located on section 6, Township 89, Range 15, in the early part of the month of August, 1853. He immediately commenced the erection of a cabin, into which he moved October the 4th, 1853. Mr. Peck, now an old man of some 80 years, is still living on the old place, is hale and hearty, is surrounded with his children and grandchildren, has never regretted the day on which he pitched his tent on Grundy soil!

In the latter part of August 1853, John Fred came from Henry County, Illinois to seek a home in the west. After crossing the Cedar at the place where the city of Waterloo now flourishes, then consisting of two log houses, he followed the course of the Black Hawk Creek and after considerable difficulty in crossing sloughs and small streams, he halted near a small tributary of the Black Hawk, now know as Fred's Creek, and in a fine grove of oaks on section 23, Township 87, 15, now Black Hawk Township. He immediately constructed a log house and for some time remained without seeing any other human being than the members of his own family. His son-in-law, Wm. E. Cremer, came and settled near him in December, 1853. The hospitality of the earliest pioneers in a new country is proverbial and both Mr. Peck and Mr. Fred were obliged to entertain any one who might happen to come their way and frequently this hospitality was taxed to the utmost. In the center of the County



near Grundy Center, Thomas G. Hoxie came the Spring of 1855 as the first settler and after undergoing many hardships, incident to prairie life, has now in his old age and a well-improved farm, the satisfaction of being surrounded by neighbors and friends. Thomas G. Copp, Myron Dougherty and E. O. Leach settled, in the month of May, 1855, where the town of

#### GRUNDY CENTER

is now located. In the west of the County C. F. Clarkson opened in May, 1855, his great Melrose Farm, having entered his land in October, 1854. Wm. Everhart and Adna Orcutt were the first settlers of German Township. A Mr. Whaley was early in Shiloh. In the southwest part of the County Samuel Spurlin, R. T. Vinson, Morris Haskins and Wm. Vinton were among the first to try Grundy soil. The first settler of Clay Township was Cheney Thomas, who came in the Spring of 1854; Harrison Brooks and family settled near him in the Autumn of the same year, and John W. Conrad had his land broken in 1854 and removed to the County early in 1855. In Beaver Township Martin Cartner, Daniel Pickett, James Foster and C. G. Courtright were among the early arrivals. Pleasant Valley Township had its first settler at Burk's Grove. Wm. Houck came early in '56 to Lincoln Township and Elias Marble made the first improvements in Colfax. A. G. Gower settled in Grant township in the Spring of 1855, and being a good Democrat--the County under a Democratic administration--had a post-office established, which, however, failed for want of a mail route to it.





At the time of the first settlement, game was quite abundant. Elk and deer were plenty and occasionally a buffalo was met. In 1854 John Adams erected a cabin and settled in what is yet known as Adams' Grove, on the Black Hawk creek. Shortly after his arrival, one evening he saw a drove of large animals coming from the prairie towards the grove, which appeared at first as a drove of cattle. As he expected to find some human being with them and the appearance of a man being a rare occurrence he went out to meet the new arrival. He, however, soon ascertained, to his astonishment, that the supposed herd of cattle were some 50 or 60 elk, making for his grove. Mr. Adams shrewdly withdrew and the elk entered the grove and quietly laid down for the night. By early dawn next morning Adams was up and armed with his trusty rifle, soon saw the antlers of the elk, which looked like the whitened branches of dead and broken trees projecting from the underbrush. He killed several, but the elk were loth to leave, and Mr. A. succeeded, after mounting his horse, it becoming almost unmanageable at the sight of these huge monsters, in killing half a dozen of them before they made for the prairie. In January 1854 the Fred boys, Wm. Dremer and Samuel Gibson went on a hunting excursion up the Black Hawk to Adams,' then across the prairie to Fifteen-mile Grove; from there retracing their steps toward Twelve-mile Grove and home, expecting to arrive there by daylight, but night overtook them and the whole party became completely bewildered and lost. They however wandered on in the cold and snow and came to a grove, where they concluded to halt and camp





out, with the long and dreary winter night before them. In looking around for material to build a fire, they saw a light and going to it found themselves in their own grove, to their joy and the great merriment of old Mr. Fred. At another time they had slowly and carefully crawled up to a large elk, when just at the moment they were ready to fire, a shot was discharged from the opposite direction from them, which killed the game and took the prize which they thought they had almost in their grasp.

The Autumn of 1855 was very fine, but an early frost had killed the prairie grass and many of the settlers had barely secured their supply of hay for the Winter, when in October during a high wind a prairie fire came in upon them from the West and burnt up nearly all the hay that had been gathered in the County. Mr. Hoxie was still at work in the hay field on the north side of the Black Hawk Creek and had driven a load of hay between two stacks, when he became aware of the approach of the fire. He immediately proceeded to unhitch his horses from the wagon; before he could accomplish this, the fire was upon him and he had to abandon them, losing two horses and wagon, all his hay, and barely escaped with his own life, being severely burned in trying to save the team. Two young men who were helping him ran to the stream near by and threw themselves headlong into it, and although they kept their heads under water as long as they could hold their breath, the hair on the backs of their heads was burned so much that it came off in great handfuls.

Mrs. Copp was alone with her daughter in her house, when she saw the fire approach and run up to their good store of 30 tons of hay and envelop



it in flames. The hay was stacked near the house and one-half of the roof was covered with hay; she thought that the only way to save her child and herself was to run to a well which had been dug at the section corners a short distance from the house. The child not realizing the danger fully was unwilling to go unless she could also take two little kittens from the house and had to be carried by force to the well by Mrs. Copp; and they had barely reached it when the fire swept by, the flames leaping upon their clothes, but fortunately not burning either of them severely. The Freds further down the creek lost all their hay the fire sweeping entirely through the grove, leaping the creek as if it were not there and rushing on in its wild frenzied course unimpeded. The whole country seemed to have burnt over at this great fire and the landscape looked like one black ocean, relieved by nothing, and the settlers were thankful for the first snow that Fall to lighten the dark waste around them. The Winter of 1856 was quite severe and the settlers suffered many hardships in providing fuel and provisions.

Thomas G. Copp of Addison, Maine came in the Spring of 1855 to the west to look up a location. On his way from Cedar Rapids to Waterloo, he fell in company with Myron Dougherty and E. O. Leach of Coldwater, Michigan, who were traveling for the same purpose. These three concluded to settle together, and after visiting all the surrounding counties came to the place where the town of Grundy Center is now located. They were much pleased with the situation; the prairie was charming; the Black Hawk Creek on the North and another small creek to the South left a high, rolling piece of prairie, which appeared by nature destined for the location of a





town. They camped on the present town site on the 27th day of May, 1855, and decided to make the place their future home. They at once procured the services of John H. Leavitt of Waterloo as surveyor who found for them the government corners of the land described. They were on the town line between Townships 87.17 and 87.16, and also the land on the west side of the line could be bought at the Des Moines land office, and on the east side at Dubuque, and Mr. Copp at once went to Dubuque to purchase 320 acres in section 7,87,10, and Mr. Dougherty to locate 320 acres in 12,87,17, while Mr. Leach remained on the prairie to watch the claim. Being successful in their purchases on their return they energetically set at work to improve their lands. They broke 36 acres--12 acres for each--in June, and erected a log house for Mr. Copp in July; and petitioned for a mail route and post-office which they had established and named Grundy Center, with Thos. G. Copp as the first postmaster. This mail route ran from Waterloo up the Black Hawk on the south side by way of Hudson to Grundy Center and Steamboat Rock and return, once a week. In consequence of the establishment of this line, the first bridges across the creeks were put in on the road from Waterloo to Grundy Center and Steamboat Rock. The wife of Mr. Copp and her father, Daniel S. Mass, followed Mr. Copp in August 1855, and in the Fall Holmes N. Mass and Arthur W. Lawrence came to take up their residence near Grundy Center.

The spring of 1856 brought a large number of settlers. Mr. Dougherty had returned to Michigan in the fall of 1855, and remained there. Mr. Leach sold out to John Overdear, who came in the spring of 1856, and settled near the house of Mr. Copp.





On the 6th of March, 1856, the county was organized as a separate and distinct commonwealth.

The first election was held at the house of Thomas G. Copp, on the 5th day of May, 1856, and the following officers were elected as the first officers of the county:

For County Judge--Arthur W. Lawrence

Prosecuting Attorney--C. F. Clarkson

Clerk of the District Court--Elias Marble

Treasurer and Recorder--Thomas G. Copp

Sheriff--Thomas G. Hoxie

Coroner--Ira B. Thomas

School Fund Commissioner--Cornelius Ketchum

Drainage Commissioner--Chas Ketchum

County Surveyor--Henry W. Allen

The county officers had their offices in their respective dwellings. The county was then divided into three election precincts: Grundy township, consisting of the four northern Congressional townships. Palermo township being the eight middle townships and Felix township taking in the two southern townships.

The town of Grundy Center was laid out in May, 1856, by John Overdear and Thomas G. Copp in the middle of the east half of section 12, township 87, range 17; each party laying out 60 acres on the two sides of the half section line. Soon after this the Proclamation of the Governor was published for the location of the County seat of the new County. Three commissioners



were appointed to proceed to the county and locate the site, according to the needs and convenience of the people. Grundy Center being the only town, and its people having been the prime movers in the organization of the county, expected the location at their place as a matter of course. Other designing parties, however, desired to reap some benefit from the labors of the men who had brought the matter to its present state of progress, and Mr. Cunningham, of Steamboat Rock, beleaguered the commissioners to locate the county seat some six miles northwest of the Center, where he owned some land, and Mr. T. E. Brown of Des Moines, in conjunction with J. D. Thompson of Eldora, had a suitable location chosen on the farm where Mr. Dunn at present resides. However, the decision was made in favor of Grundy Center, in December 1856, but not until the proprietors of the town had conveyed ten blocks each in their village, and Mr. H. N. Wass had also donated 80 acres of land adjoining the town site to a third party, knowingly for the benefit and use of these commissioners. These men also named the new county seat, calling it "Belpre", meaning beautiful prairie. The people of the village, however, thought that the honorable commissioners had exceeded their authority in naming the town, and the postoffice name remaining, Grundy Center, continued to use the old name, and the town is known by that name to this day, notwithstanding the name was changed upon petition, and an order of the Board of Supervisors in 1862 to Orion, which really is at this time the legal name of the village.

The winter of 1856 and 1857 tried the endurance of the settlers to the utmost. On the 2nd day of December a snow storm set in from the Northwest,





lasting for three days and nights, finishing up with a change of wind to the Northwest, and a blinding hurricane, which drifted the snow that had fallen to the depth of from three to four feet, into immense drifts, interrupting all travel and filling every exposed crevice, nook and corner. The entire winter was one continuous series of storms. Sometimes what is now known as an "Iowa blizzard," would spring up from a clear sky, making it impossible for man and beast to withstand its blinding fury. Many lives were lost throughout the State by exposure, and cattle and hogs froze to death by the hundreds. In January of that year the thermometer stood at various times at from 38 to 42 degrees below zero.

After the location of the county seat at Grundy Center, Judge Lawrence set to work at once to erect a Court House. The Judge of a county was at that time clothed with nearly absolute authority, and without consultation with the people or the advice of legal talent, Lawrence entered into a contract with Sanford Baldwin for the erection of a building costing \$10,000. It appears that Mr. Baldwin exerted a bad influence over Judge Lawrence and induced him to issue county warrants to a larger amount than the contract specified, and the county was soon flooded with Grundy county warrants, which the unscrupulous Baldwin had sold at any price he could obtain for them. Matters were going from bad to worse, and it became necessary for somebody to interfere. Elias Marble, C. F. Clarkson and Lyman Cole obtained a writ of injunction to stop the further issuance of county orders, and also to prohibit the Treasurer from paying a great number of those already issued.





The swindle on the county caused a long and bitter litigation, continuing for many years. The county, however, came out victorious, and great credit is due the parties that interceded, and thus saved the county from financial ruin. At the August election of 1857 Elias Marble and R. T. Vinson were opposing candidates for the office of county Judge. The canvassers declared R. T. Vinson elected and he assumed the functions of the office. Elias Marble contested the election and commenced an action in which he was successful, and Mr. Vinson was ousted and Elias Marble installed as county judge by decree of court dated September 27th, 1858.

The first Court in the county was held in a log-house on the 25th day of May. J. D. Thompson, of Eldora, was the presiding Judge, T. G. Copp clerk, and Thos. G. Hoxie, sheriff.

At this term the grand jury found a number of indictments against A. W. Lawrence ex-Judge and Sanford Baldwin. However, Baldwin could not be found. Lawrence was at once arrested, but released on bail. At the November term of 1858 he was condemned to go to jail and placed in the custody of the sheriff, until he could be transported to the Linn county jail. Sheriff Hoxie left his prisoner at the house of H. N. Wass in charge of his deputy, Mr. Taylor, while he could go to his own home for supper. Mr. Taylor was very fond of telling stories, and soon found some one to listen to one of his long-winded efforts. While thus engaged, Mr. Lawrence stepped into an adjoining room, and when Mr. Taylor finished his story and looked for his prisoner, he was gone, and as night had



closed in, by this time, he escaped successfully, notwithstanding the efforts of Sheriff Hoxie for his recapture.

When Elias Marble came into the office as county Judge he found the county Treasury completely exhausted, and a large and expensive law-suit instituted against the county in which no less a sum than \$25,000 were claimed as justly due the plaintiffs. The county had, for this large sum, a pretext for a Court-house--an unfinished building, the possession of which was barred by mechanics' liens, and claims of different parties and different kinds. The county rented rooms for its offices in the house of Mr. Copp, now the Eagle House, and afterwards in the house of Mr. Troutman, on the property now owned by Dr. Crouse.

During the year 1859 Judge Marble succeeded in gaining possession of the Court House for the county, and one room was finished and occupied by all the officers jointly.

The financial crisis of 1857 had a very depressing influence on the prosperity of the county, and the years 1857, 1858 and 1859 may well be considered the darkest and hardest in the history of the county. The products of the farm were almost unsaleable. Wheat was worth from 25 to 30 cents per bushel, and a general wet season during the summer of 1858 adding to the general despondency. While the county seemed almost hopeless, some parties from Eldora, aided and encouraged by men in our own county, conceived the idea to divide the county, and thus by adding territory to Hardin county on the east, make Eldora the permanent county seat of that county--a bitter contest being fought between two different points for its





location. As soon as this became known in the county, an out-spoken and energetic opposition sprang up, and a delegation was sent at once to Des Moines, the Legislature then being in session--to counteract any scheme for the division. Mr. Marble was selected as the champion of the rights of Grundy, and at Des Moines soon demonstrated to the members of the General Assembly, the injustice of such a course, and saved the county from dismemberment. Judge Marble was re-elected in 1859, and held the office until the system of government was changed and the administration of county affairs entrusted to a Board of Supervisors, consisting of one member from each civil township.

The county at that time had seven townships. The former township of Grundy had been divided into three civil townships--89-15 was called Fairfield township; 89-16 Beaver township, and 89-17 and 89-18 was Orcutt township. Palermo township had two townships taken off on the west side--87-18 and 88-18 and this was named Melrose township. On the east side two townships--87-15 and 88--were formed into a new township under the new name of Blackhawk.

The first session of the Board of Supervisors was held at the Court-house in Grundy Center on the 7th day of January, 1861, and its first seven members were:

Elias Marble, of Palermo, Chairman, C. F. Clarkson, of Melrose, Henry Hammer, of Fairfield, D. M. Orcutt of Orcutt, William Vinton, of Felix, and C. G. Courtright of Beaver.





One of the first acts of the supervisors was to make the Court House inhabitable, it was at once plastered, re-roofed, painted and repaired throughout, and although by no means a stately or convenient building, it has answered the purpose of a county Court house.

The management of the affairs of the county under the Supervisor system has been marked by prudence, strict economy and thorough supervision of the financial resources of the county, and their aim has always been, never to incur any expense, unless the means were at hand or provided for, and Grundy county has at this day the proud record, that she is entirely out of debt, not owing one dollar.

During the war of rebellion, Grundy county's sons responded readily at the Nation's call. One hundred and thirty soldiers went out from her borders and on many a hard fought field they proved their bravery and heroism. The county provided a relief fund for the wives and families of those gone to the front, and a Ladies' Aid Society formed in Grundy Center under the presidency of Mrs. T. G. Copp, sent many articles to the field to relieve suffering and sustain the sick and wounded.

The county also paid each soldier that enlisted from Grundy, one hundred dollars bounty, which sum was afterwards increased to two hundred dollars, but did not go into the extravagance of incurring an enormous county debt, under the load of which some of our sister counties still groan.

From 1857 to 1865 the development of the county was continuous, though not rapid, only a few settlers coming in, but these with the older inhabitants proved to the world the richness of our soil, the healthfulness of the climate



and the high moral tone of the people, so that after the close of the war, when swords were turned into ploughshares, emigration poured into Grundy at a prodigious rate. The farmers of Illinois and Wisconsin and other eastern States had become aware that the most productive soil, was away from the timber, on the open prairie and men, that had heretofore avoided the prairie, now went boldly out and commenced active farm operations and improvements. In 1866-1867 and 1868 Grundy county gained more actual settlers than it had in the former ten years of its existence, and from that time to the present the influx has been steady and continuous, and what has been an unbroken wilderness is now turned into plowfields, gardens, meadows and pastures, so much so, in fact, that a piece of unbroken prairie is now the exception instead of the rule as formerly.

A great inducement to settlers in this prairie country has been the adoption of the so called "Herd Law", by which every person is liable for the damages which his animals may do. By this simple law the indiscriminate running at large of domestic animals is restricted, and no fences are needed to protect the fields of grain from the ravages of prowling herds either in the day time or at night. Some idea of the progress of the county can be formed by a comparison of the census returns of 1860 and 1875. In 1860 the total population of the county was 793; in 1875 the number is 8134.

The number of acres improved in 1860 was 5458, in 1875 it is 146,089. The number of bushels of wheat harvested in 1860 was 16,016, in 1875 it is 976,607.





The number of bushels of corn in 1860 was 50,435, in 1875 it is 1,482,582. The number of bushels of oats in 1860 was 17,138, in 1875 it is 401,948. The number of bushels of barley in 1860 was 900, in 1875 152,168. In 1875, 24,591 tons of tame and wild hay were gathered and 77,702 bushels of potatoes. We have 6,402 horses, 13,000 head of cattle and 30,000 hogs. We also find in 1875 that we have only 886 acres of natural timber, but 1,420 of artificial timber, besides 57,714 rods of hedge, 7,926 orchard trees in bearing and 51,920 not in bearing, to say nothing of products of the dairy, wool and many other articles. By the erection of cheese factories, of which there are several in the county, one on the farm of H. Boies, near Grundy Center, one at L. P. Vanderlip's in Grant township, and one at Colonel D. McMartin's near Beaman, a new branch of industry has of late been developed that will ultimately become one of the leading branches of industry in the county.

The first Superintendent of Common Schools was Elias Macy, of Melrose. At that time there were not over ten schools in the county, perhaps each organized township having one school. The progress in educational matters has been rapid, the liberal laws of our noble state giving each child an opportunity for a good common school education. In the county there are at present 111 school-houses, 115 teachers employed, and 3,469 scholars. Under the present efficient county Superintendent, G. R. Stoddard, the schools are advancing to a higher grade, and consequently the preparation of the teacher must be more thorough. The first school in the county, it is thought, was taught by Miss Ellen M. Lawrence, in the village of Grundy Center.





The first newspaper was published in 1861, at Grundy Center, by W. H. Hartman, and edited by Heber Chaffee, under the name of the Pioneer. Its career was very short as it was published only about one year. In 1868 the Grundy County Atlas was founded by L. D. Tracy, publisher and editor, who, after seeing the paper firmly established, sold it to George K. Shaw, who again transferred it and it came again into the possession of Tracy, who in 1870, sold to the present proprietors, Rea & Moffett. The Atlas is at present edited by Rowe & Keiter, and was until January 1, 1876, the only newspaper in the county. At the time stated Daniel Kerr and J. C. Stoughton established a new paper called THE NEW CENTURY, and both papers have a good circulation and both are Republican in politics.

Ever since the organization of the county the Republican party has been largely in the ascendancy. At the last Presidential election 602 Republican votes were cast, and only 160 Democratic votes. There are at present 13 organized townships in the county, and consequently 13 election precincts. The township of Orcutt was sub-divided, and lost its name entirely. 89-18 was called German township, and 89-17 Pleasant Valley. Helrose township\* was named Shiloh. Blackhawk township was divided into Grant--88-15, and Blackhawk 87-15. The north half of Palermo was called Lincoln township, and this was again divided. 88-16 remaining Lincoln township, and 88-17 was christened Colfax. Felis township lost its east half which was named Clay, being numbered 86-17. Palermo township still consists of two congressional townships.

\*INSERT: has been divided--81-18 retaining the original name, and 88



The number of Supervisors was reduced by act of the General Assembly to three from the county at large, but afterwards the number has been again increased. The county has at present seven Supervisors or one from each two congressional townships the law being such that each supervisor must reside in a separate township, and this method gives a very fair representation of the people.

The inhabitants of the county are very largely from the States of Illinois and Wisconsin, though all nationalities are represented. Of the foreign population the Germans predominate, and occupy German township almost exclusively, as well as a large portion of Shiloh, Pleasant Valley, and Colfax townships. There is also a large settlement of Germans in Blackhawk township. They are considered as among the best of citizens, being remarkable for their industry, economy, honesty and reliability. They have erected more churches than any other class of people in the county, and have no less than nine church edifices in which regular services are held. A fine church has been erected in the southwest part of Palermo township to the great credit of the neighborhood. A church is also in process of erection in Melrose township. The Advents of Fairfield township have a large and imposing church edifice. Grundy Center has two good churches, the first one being built in 1872 and the other in 1875. The first religious services in the county are supposed to have been held by Mr. Martindale, a Baptist minister, at the house of Mr. John Freal in 1855. In many of the townships religious services are held in the schoolhouses, and Sabbath schools are in connection with every church, and the schoolhouses throughout the county seem as places





for the assemblage of Sabbath Schools. At the last County Sabbath School Convention only 600 scholars were reported, though it is estimated that the actual number is much higher. The first Sabbath school in the county was organized through the efforts of Miss Sophia Severance, in the town of Grundy Center, and that lady was the first Superintendent and teacher.

Grundy County has been without railroad communication, and consequently largely tributary to the adjoining counties. At an early day it was supposed that the land grant to aid the construction of the Dubuque and Pacific Railroad, now known as the Illinois Central, would obligate that road to run from Waterloo westward through the heart of Grundy. Its course, however, turned northward, and, though touching the county at its northeast extremity and keeping along its northern boundary at a distance of from one-half to three miles, it gives no market place within the limits of the county. The Central Railway of Iowa runs on the west from three to five miles from the western boundary line, and the Northwestern Railway is about ten miles south of the southern limits of the county.

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In the summer of 1875 an enterprising company of men commenced the construction of a railroad from Liscomb, a station on the Central of Iowa, eastward into Grundy. Considering the general depression in business and the stand-still of railroad building, this was a Herculean effort. The road was graded, tied, rails put upon it and the first train passed over the new road in January 1876, to the town of Beaman, a distance of ten miles, of which three or four miles are in Grundy county. The town of Beaman was laid out in the summer of 1875 by S. S. and H. H. Beaman, on the west half of the



northwest quarter of township 34, section 86, range 17, and although its railroad was of narrow-gauge, and had wooden rails, the town grew rapidly and soon became quite an extensive market place. Lumber and grain in large quantities were shipped in, and grain and hogs shipped out. The town has a number of stores, blacksmith shops, hotels several professional men, and gives the unmistakable evidence of a wide-awake community. Its population must be nearly 100 souls. A Sabbath School is in a flourishing condition, and a school-house in the immediate future contemplated.

There are at present eight post offices in the county, and these are located at Grundy Center, Reinbeck, in Blackhawk township, Palermo, in the west part of Palermo township, Melrose, in the center of Melrose, Alice in the southwest part of Palermo township, Beaman, at the town of Beaman, Lincoln Center, in Lincoln township, and Elizabeth, in Colfax township. A daily mail runs from Eldora to Grundy Center, and all other offices have mails from two to four times weekly.

The country is widely known for its extensive farms, and perhaps the greatest number of large farms of any county in the State, the largest farm containing over 5,000 acres, is owned by George Wells, and is located in Shiloh township. There are 14 other farms in the county containing over 1,000 acres. Farms of the extent of 320 and 640 acres are so numerous that it is difficult to count them.

Grundy County is at present a part of the Fourth Congressional District, belongs to the 9th Judicial, and forms, in connection with Marshall county,





the 14th Senatorial District. It constitutes the 48th Representative District, and has there a Representative in the General Assembly.

The town of Grundy Center has at this time a population of 330. It contains 51 dwelling houses. It has three grocery and dry goods stores, two drug stores, one hardware store, 3 blacksmith shops, one wagon shop, two hotels, one tailor shop, one harness shop, one shoemaker shop, one meat market, 2 restaurants, 1 billiard saloon, 2 carpenter shops, 2 newspapers, 4 attorneys, 3 doctors, 1 dentist, 2 agricultural warehouses, 2 livery stables, 2 churches, 2 parsonages, one Free Mason's lodge, and one Odd Fellow's lodge.

Looking back upon the twenty years of the county's existence, it must be acknowledged that her progress has been rapid. What was then an unbroken and vast wilderness is now dotted with fine farm houses, fair fields and beautiful groves and hedges. School-houses are met with in every direction, and churches elevate their spires toward heaven. And if the development of the county has been rapid in the past, what must be its future? With a wealth of soil, with an intelligent, energetic and moral population, with a healthful and invigorating climate, with the possibilities of a railroad, the brightest anticipation may be realized, and Grundy county must and will always rank as one of the best in the State.

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